

The

NEWSLETTER

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA
LA SOCIÉTÉ BIBLIOGRAPHIQUE DU CANADA

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SPECIAL ISSUE

in honour of

DR. LORNE PIERCE

Honorary President of the Bibliographical Society of Canada

on the occasion of his retirement as

Editor of The Ryerson Press

(February 1, 1960)

LORNE PIERCE

Degrees and Honours

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| 1912 | B. A. | Queen's University, Kingston |
| 1916 | B. D. | Union Theological Seminary, New York |
| 1916 | M. A. | New York University, New York |
| 1917 | B. D. | Victoria College, University of Toronto |
| 1920 | Th. D. | United Theological College, Montreal |
| 1926 | LL. D. | Queen's University, Kingston |
| 1932 | D. ès L. | Laval University, Quebec |
| 1933 | LL. D. | University of New Brunswick, Fredericton |
| 1953 | Coronation Medal, Queen Elizabeth II | |
| 1954 | D. ès L. | University of Montreal, Montreal |
| 1954 | D. D. | United College, Winnipeg |
| 1955 | Litt. D. | Mount Allison University, Sackville |
| 1955 | National Award in Letters, with medal,
University of Alberta | |
| 1958 | Motion of Appreciation,
General Council of United Church of Canada,
Ottawa | |

LORNE PIERCE

Fondateur de la Société bibliographique du Canada.

Depuis longtemps se faisait sentir la nécessité de grouper les personnes qui, au Canada, s'intéressaient aux travaux de bibliographie et désiraient encourager les recherches dans ce domaine. Nos archives contiennent des lettres datant de 1928 qui témoignent que, dès cette époque, Lorne Pierce s'occupait de la formation d'une société de bibliographie.

Il en fit la proposition formelle lors d'une réunion tenue le 24 juin 1942, à laquelle assistaient Marie Tremaine, qui prit charge du secrétariat et E.C. Kyte, qui eut pour mission de rédiger un projet de constitution. M. Pierce accepta de présider aux destinées du nouveau groupement, mais seulement pendant la période d'organisation.

A cause de la guerre, le projet demeura en veilleuse. Par la correspondance qu'il échangea avec de nombreuses personnes, Lorne Pierce put se rendre compte du vif intérêt que beaucoup de Canadiens portaient aux travaux de bibliographie. Le 20 mai 1946, il convoqua une réunion à laquelle assistaient des bibliographes, des bibliothécaires et des collectionneurs bien connus qui confirmèrent leur adhésion au nouveau groupement, lui assignèrent des buts et proposèrent des méthodes qui lui permettraient de faire bonne figure parmi les sociétés étrangères de même nature.

La Société bibliographique du Canada était née. Alors, au grand regret de tous, Lorne Pierce quitta le fauteuil présidentiel: il est de ceux qui travaillent sans ostentation, mais avec quelle efficacité! Le grand mérite lui reste d'avoir été le catalyseur qui fit prendre corps au projet. Dès le début, il avait assumé, pour trois ans, la publication des transactions de la Société; depuis, il a largement facilité celle du Bulletin. Son intérêt ne s'est jamais démenti; outre ses contributions pécuniaires importantes, il faut signaler la bienveillante sympathie avec laquelle Lorne Pierce suit les travaux et la croissance de notre Société. Au moment où il choisit de se retirer des affaires, je voudrais informer tous nos membres de sa décision de continuer à s'occuper de la Société bibliographique. Rien ne saurait être plus rassurant ni plus encourageant.

Qu'il me soit permis, franchissant peut-être les barrières de la discrétion, de parler des qualités de coeur de Lorne Pierce; sa modestie dût-elle en souffrir, je ne saurais taire sa générosité et l'aide précieuse qu'il prodigue autour de lui, avec un tact infini, sans bruit, comme sur la pointe des pieds.

Il convient que je lui rende témoignage en français car il a toujours considéré le bilinguisme comme une source d'enrichissement culturel. Il appartient à d'autres de parler de son apport comme historien, comme éditeur, comme collectionneur, mais je suis heureux de saluer en Lorne Pierce un grand Canadien et le fondateur de la Société bibliographique de Canada. A ce double titre, il a droit à notre admiration et à notre reconnaissance.

Raymond Tanghe.

DR. LORNE PIERCE, EDITOR OF THE RYERSON PRESS

(The following account of Dr. Pierce's editorship is reproduced, with minor revisions, from the Foreword of The Ryerson Imprint (1954), by kind permission of the editor of that volume, Dr. W.S. Wallace, and of The Ryerson Press.)

When Lorne Pierce became editor in 1920, The Ryerson Press as a publishing house was virtually at a standstill; and he had to begin at scratch. The Press had, it is true, some contracts with the Ontario government for the printing of text-books; but these were printing jobs, and nothing more. New publishing houses were springing up in Toronto, some of them founded by former employees of The Ryerson Press; and the Press found itself in the unpleasant position, not only of losing to these newcomers some of its agency business, but also of seeing itself passed over by some of its former authors. It was obvious, moreover, that the house no longer commanded, as it had in its earlier days, the fervid loyalty of the Methodist communion. Even Methodist ministers were going elsewhere when they sought publication.

Obviously, the first task was to strengthen the ties that bound The Ryerson Press to the Methodist Church; and with this object in view, Dr. Pierce began the publication in 1922 of "The Ryerson Essays." These booklets gave to the Methodist Church, and later to the United Church, an outlet for the current thought of both ministers and laymen on religious and on public affairs such as they had not had during the later period of William Brigg's régime as Book Steward. The next problem was how to build up The Ryerson Press as a publisher of Canadian literature. Egerton Ryerson had been a figure of national importance; and it seemed proper that a publishing house bearing his name should devote itself to the cultivation of a national literature. Since both the Methodist Book Room and William Briggs had specialized in Canadian poetry, it seemed suitable to begin with that. It is significant that two of the first books Lorne Pierce brought out were E.J. Pratt's Newfoundland Verse, and William Arthur Deacon's Pens and Pirates, both designed by F.H. Varley, R.C.A. (1923), and that in 1925 he began the publication of the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books, a series of booklets that have become almost a national institution. Libraries which, in the early days of the series, failed to place continuation orders for it, are now making valiant efforts to fill in the gaps in their holdings. At the same time, Lorne Pierce launched the series of Makers of Canadian Literature, which gave Canadians for the first time a series of biographies of some of their most notable literary figures; in 1927 he wrote his admirable Outline of Canadian Literature, and later he was the editor of The Ryerson Shakespeare.

Another field he invaded was history, and in 1925 he began the publication of the Ryerson Canadian History Readers, which covered in a scholarly but readable way the whole field of Canadian history. In 1928 there appeared the first volume of the Canadian Historical Studies - a most valuable series, the publication of which (after the appearance of the late Dr. Percy Robinson's epoch-making Toronto during the French Régime) was interrupted by the Great Depression. The house had of course always been noted for its biographies and autobiographies, its local histories and its church histories, and under its new editor it continued to publish an increasingly impressive list of these.

A new field on which he set foot, and which he eventually pre-empted, was that of Canadian art. Neither the old Methodist Book Room nor William Briggs had concerned themselves much with art, but Dr. Pierce, very early in his career as editor, began the publication of a long series of books on Canadian art, some of them in a "Canadian Art Series", and some of them as separate monographs, such as William Colgate's admirable book on Canadian art. This was a distinctly new departure.

It would be difficult, indeed, to enumerate all the ways in which Lorne Pierce struck out for himself. One of the first books he published was a Canadian cook-book, which has gone into many editions and has proved a best-seller. He went out and got suitable people to write books on banking, nursing, office management, mechanical engineering, international affairs, and many other subjects - most, if not all, of which were found to fill a long-felt want. At a later period, it was a feather in his cap when The Ryerson Press joined with the Oxford University Press and the Yale University Press to bring out the important series of volumes dealing with Canadian-American relations, sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Nowhere, however, did Lorne Pierce make a cleaner break with the past than in the educational field. William Briggs had been content to tender for printing of school-books authorized by the Province of Ontario. Lorne Pierce decided to go out and build a series of school-books that would appeal to departments of education from the Atlantic to the Pacific. First of all, he published the Ryerson Books of Prose and Verse, then the Canadian Treasury Readers and similar text-books. In time, these came to be adopted in all the provinces of Canada, including Newfoundland, and their publication may well be regarded as having a national significance. But he did not confine himself to the publication of books for elementary or high schools alone; he branched out into publications for High Schools of Commerce, Technical Schools, Business Colleges, Colleges of Education, and Universities. He had even the hardihood to publish several dissertations submitted for the degree of Doctor of Pedagogy.

In what I have said about Lorne Pierce's work as editor of The Ryerson Press, I have confined myself to the matter of publication. I have not dealt with the revolution he accomplished in the matter of format. William Briggs had published his books in a decent and respectable format, as became the Book Steward of the Methodist Church, but I cannot think that anyone was ever persuaded to buy one of his books because of its appearance. Pierce evidently made up his mind from the beginning that he wanted the books which he edited to be published beautifully. He enlisted the services of several Canadian artists, notably Thoreau MacDonald, and he designed formats for Ryerson books that were so far ahead of what had preceded them that one would not recognize them as publications of the same house. One needs only to look at the Ryerson Poetry Chap-books to realize the change.

It is only when one goes through the check-list of The Ryerson Press's publications since 1920 that one realizes the magnitude of Lorne Pierce's achievement. He has built up a publishing house that was virtually moribund in 1920 into one which is not only the oldest Canadian publishing house, but is also one of the most active and most successful; and he has made a contribution to Canadian literature and life for which it would be difficult to devise an encomium too glowing.

W. S. Wallace.

THE EDITH AND LORNE PIERCE COLLECTION AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Mrs. Dora Hood refers to Dr. Lorne Pierce in her recent book, The Side Door, as "the most ardent and discriminating collector of Canadian manuscript material", a judgment in which all who know Dr. Pierce and his incomparable collection at Queen's will readily concur. No finer monument to him could be established than that of his own making - the Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection of Canadiana in the Douglas Library.

During his undergraduate days in Kingston when he began collecting Canadian authors the field was wide open. There were no university courses in Canadian literature; libraries largely ignored native writers, and there was only a handful of private collectors. Canadian books and pamphlets could then be picked up for a song and even an amateur collector could afford to "go the limit". Now, as Dr. Pierce has said, "the limit is away out in the rare atmosphere of the inter-stellar spaces".

In 1920 when he became Editor of the Ryerson Press, Dr. Pierce was able to give free rein to his enthusiasms. He encouraged native talent wherever he found it and soon put The Ryerson Press in the forefront of publishers bringing out work by Canadian writers in all fields. He himself wrote well and widely on Canadian art, literature, and history, and used his royalties to build up a thoroughly representative Canadian collection, the nucleus of which he turned over to Queen's in 1924, adding to it year by year as he made new discoveries and accumulations.

Like all master collectors, Dr. Pierce has a sort of sixth sense for discovering unsuspected sources of manuscript material. Years ago on a drive through eastern Ontario, he stopped near Brockville to admire a fine old stone house. Others would then have passed on, but Dr. Pierce called on the owner, who turned out to be a direct descendant of the original U.E.L. builder. He spent a pleasant afternoon, made a new friend, and before leaving was presented with the family papers of Dr. Solomon Jones, Member of the Legislative Assembly for the years 1795 to 1810. Again, when writing the life of William Kirby, he turned up a treasure trove of Kirby papers, which the family had relegated to an old woodshed at their home in Niagara-on-the-lake, and another cache in a Toronto garage. These are now in the Ontario Archives, but recently Dr. Pierce acquired from the aged son of Kirby's amanuensis the original manuscript for the greater part of The Golden Dog - one of the most interesting items in the Edith and Lorne Pierce Room.

Unique also are the papers, diaries, letters and records of Marjorie Pickthall, once librarian at Victoria College. Dr. Pierce was mainly responsible for the first collected edition of her poems, working with her father, then a resident of Toronto. Later he purchased the papers for Queen's.

Of the works of earlier Canadian writers, those of Major John Richardson are now among the most eagerly sought and most difficult to obtain. Dr. Pierce has almost all of them, and in addition, the only extant Richardson manuscript, "On Desertion in Canada", a thirteen-page manuscript, dated 1844, which appears to be an early draft of a chapter in his subsequent volume Seven Years in Canada. Dr. Pierce also obtained the original manuscript copy of the

Canadian Oliver Goldsmith's autobiography (published by Rev. W.E. Myatt, The Ryerson Press, 1943) and a small volume of holograph poems, familiar to members of the Bibliographical Society as it forms No. 4 in the Reprint Series, The Manuscript Book of Oliver Goldsmith (1950).

These are only a few of the treasures in the Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection, now adequately housed in a separate room on the second floor of the Douglas Library. It is a pleasant, cheerful room, well appointed, with curtains on the mullioned windows and framed autographed photographs of Canadian authors on the walls above the surrounding bookshelves. Two fine pieces of walnut furniture, Canadian antiques, adorn the room: a feathered walnut table and a tall bookcase with glass-panelled doors and a commodious cupboard below. Both these pieces were once the property of Sir John A. Macdonald. The bookcase, a gift of the late Mrs. Pierce, along with a 24-drawer document filing cabinet contains the Bliss Carman Collection, unique in its range and completeness.

As a "superannuated man", Dr. Pierce hopes to keep office hours as usual in the Edith and Lorne Pierce Room of the Douglas Library, to finish his definitive work on Carman, and, if he can overcome a lifelong habit of hiding his own light under a bushel, to write his memoirs. As few other Canadians, he knows our poets and prose writers, their struggles, aspirations and triumphs, and from the publisher's vantage point, the obstacles, financial, sectional and national that so long retarded our literary awareness. No assessment of his own part in creating a Canadian literature will come from the pen of Lorne Pierce. Others will do that, and the materials for such an assessment will be found in the archives of The Ryerson Press and in the Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection in the Douglas Library.

H. Pearson Gundy.

LORNE PIERCE: A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Members of the Society will be pleased to learn that a 76-page bibliography of our Honorary President has been compiled by Mr. Frank Flemington of The Ryerson Press. Mr. Flemington's typescript includes books and brochures written or edited by Dr. Pierce, the latter's contributions to periodicals or books edited by others, and numerous biographical and critical sources. The descriptive entries are very full, with summaries of contents and details of printings and bindings.

A section entitled "Addenda" lists books dedicated to Dr. Pierce, notes regarding portraits, degrees and honours, and information about associations founded by, or actively supported by, Dr. Pierce. The "Appendices" list the various Ryerson Series directed by Dr. Pierce over the years: the Makers of Canadian Literature, the Ryerson Poetry Chap-Books, the Ryerson Canadian History Readers, the Canadian Historical Studies, and others.

The Newsletter is indebted to Mr. Flemington for his kind permission to reproduce information from his bibliography in this issue.

THE LORNE PIERCE MEDAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1926, Dr. Pierce at once sought to encourage Canadian letters by donating the Lorne Pierce Medal, to be awarded to the outstanding Canadian author of each year. The following writers have been so honoured:

1926	Sir Charles G. D. Roberts
1927	Duncan Campbell Scott
1928	Bliss Carman
1929	Mgr Camille Roy
1930	Sir Andrew Macphail
1931	L'hon. juge Adjutor Rivard
1932	Archibald MacMechan
1933	No award
1934	Frederick Philip Grove
1935	Edouard Montpetit
1936	Pelham Edgar
1937	Stephen B. Leacock
1938	Mazo de la Roche
1939	No award
1940	E. J. Pratt
1941	Léon Gérin
1942	Watson Kirkconnell
1943	George Herbert Clarke
1944	Audrey Alexandra Brown
1945	Abbé Félix-Antoine Savard
1946	Charles N. Cochrane, (posthumously)
1947	Dorothy Livesay (Mrs. Duncan Macnair)
1948	Gabrielle Roy (Mme Marcel Carbotte)
1949	John Murray Gibbon
1950	Marius Barbeau
1951	E. K. Brown (posthumously)
1952	Hugh MacLennan
1953	Earle Birney
1954	Alain Grandbois
1955	William Bruce Hutchison
1956	Thomas H. Raddall
1957	A. M. Klein
1958	H. Northrop Frye
1959	Philippe Panneton

DR. LOUIS BLAKE DUFF

(1878 - 1959)

Members of the Society learned with regret of the death in August of a former President of the Society, Dr. Louis Blake Duff. Secretary of the Welland Historical Society for more than twenty years, Dr. Duff was a distinguished author and book-collector, and a generous benefactor of various Ontario libraries.